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Corvo (city)

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Corvo (Elder Speech: *Cerbin*) is a city in the duchy of Toussaint, situated to the southeast, approximately a two-day horseback ride from Beauclair. It is located near the border with the Tir Tochair Mountains, close where the Eternel River, one of the smaller tributaries of the Sansretour, originates. The city's population is predominantly human, with a notable presence of gnomes, halflings, and dwarves who came from the aforementioned mountain range.

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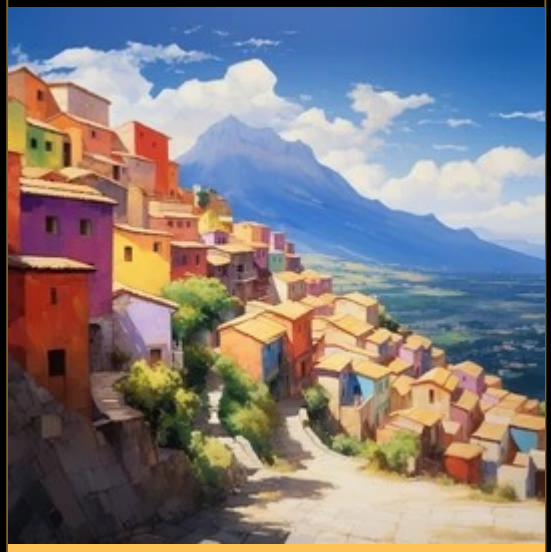
Corvo (city)



Information

Type	City
Country	Toussaint

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History

Origins

In its origins, Cerbin, later to be known as Corvo, functioned as an elven commercial and defensive outpost – not even reaching the status of a city or town. The elves used it for trading with gnomes, resembling later human practices. Cerbin also served as a defensive outpost, primarily countering small skirmishes between the Aen Seidhe and dwarves.

The significant shift occurred during the early stages of the human invasion that would lead to the creation of the kingdom and later duchy of Toussaint, commanded by Ludovic. Once the few elves present in the defensive outpost and trading post were massacred, humans, recognizing the strategic location, deemed it suitable for establishing their base of operations. This move aimed to launch subsequent invasion phases, that would ultimately consolidating human control over the region.

After Ludovic's ascension to king, the base of operations that would become Corvo was abandoned. And gradually, it transformed into the thriving city known today, overcoming challenges posed by the terrain. This transformation was facilitated by nearby natural mines and the aforementioned trade with the gnomes, that later would involve the participation of dwarves and halflings.

13th century

In 1275, just two days following the Night of the Long Fangs, the city of Corvo found itself inundated with refugees fleeing the vampire attack. While the majority eventually moved back to Beauclair, a few chose to establish roots in Corvo, compelled by the extensive reconstruction their homes demanded—a process that would be too time-consuming for them to return to a normal life soon.

Geography and Climate

Corvo stands as the second-largest city in Toussaint, though it pales in size when compared to the grandeur of Beauclair. Its relative modesty can be attributed to its location, situated not within the fertile lands of the Sansretour Valley but rather in the eastern reaches of Tir Tochair. This region is known for its comparative lack of lushness, in stark contrast to the landscapes of the Tir Tochair Mountains blessed by the presence of the Velda and Glyswen rivers. Despite this, the proximity of the modest River Eternel ensures that the city's inhabitants have access to a water source.

The climate is similar to the rest of Toussaint but slightly drier. Winters tend to be milder than in the valley. For this reason, the population sometimes experiences a temporary increase during this time of the year.

Economy

Unlike the rest of Toussaint, Corvo's economy is not as reliant on the wine industry, as the lands it occupies are not good enough to diverse vine cultivation. Only one type of wine, the Corvo Rosso, is cultivated in the region. Instead, its economy primarily thrives on trade, stemming from the complete exploitation of nearby mines in previous centuries. Corvo serves as a transit hub for dwarven, gnome, and halfling merchants from Tir Tochair who trade minerals extracted from the mountains before continuing their journey to sell more goods in places like Beauclair.

However, there is also a modest agrarian aspect to the economy, as the surrounding lands allow for the cultivation of some crops beyond the Corvo Rosso vines. This has led to the presence of a few farms in the vicinity, primarily managed by the halfling population. Despite the challenging nature of the city's lands for vine and other crop cultivation, this economic diversity has brought prosperity to Corvo, reaching a level comparable to that of the duchy's capital.

In recent years, the agrarian part of Corvo has gained more prominence as traders from other parts of the empire have introduced the tobacco plant from the distant Apumayu Basin in the Far South, which can be grown in Corvo. This has not only expanded agricultural endeavors but has also added a new dimension to the local economy. The tobacco industry is flourishing, and Corvo's tobacco products are gaining recognition beyond its borders, although still in the shadow of the tobacco products exported by the island of Basilia, contributing to

an increase in trade and prosperity.

Demographics

The population of Corvo is approximately 3,800 -4,500, consisting mostly of humans, without accounting for the population boost in winter. Additionally, there are around 400 dwarves, 300 gnomes, and 100 halflings who have made the city or the surrounding area their place of residence. The dwarf population, for the most part, works in the first branch that the Zammorto bank managed to open outside Redania. The gnomes, on the other hand, are involved in various trades, and the halflings, as already mentioned, mostly work on the farms near the city.

Districts

- Dwarf Quarter: Located in near proximity to the Zammorto Bank Corvan Branch, this is where the dwarf population resides.
- Gnomish Quarter: Situated in the south of Old Corvo, this is where the majority of the gnomes have established their community (with the exception of cases like Rumplestelt)
- New Corvo: This district is a bustling center of trade and commerce, where the majority of the city's economic activities take place. It is known for its marketplaces, workshops, taverns and inns. The Zammorto Bank Corvan Branch is also located in this district.
- Old Corvo: Old Corvo is the historical heart of the city, featuring narrow cobblestone streets and well-preserved buildings dating from the 9th to the 11th century. De Valois Castle, close to Old Corvo, dominates the skyline, symbolizing the city's longstanding history and the rule of the de Valois family.
- Saints District (old Vysogota District): Initially named after the renowned scholar Vysogota, this district was later renamed Saints District by the order of Duke Raymund to alleviate potential political tensions with the Empire. The area is distinguished by its academic institutions, libraries, and cultural landmarks, establishing it as a focal point for intellectual and artistic pursuits. Additionally, owing to its close proximity to the de Valois Castle, the district is predominantly inhabited by the aristocracy and bourgeoisie. As a result, it is marked by the presence of grand mansions, contributing to

the district's opulent and prestigious atmosphere. The Zerrikania Embassy is also located here.
- Halflings Quarter: District within Corvo, home to part of the city's halfling population, located in the outskirts, near the farms.
- The Painted District: Referred to colloquially as a district, is a vibrant neighborhood located in New Corvo where artists and muralists showcase their talents on the walls of buildings. It was part of an initiative to address what Count Lucien perceived as vandalism, inspired by a visit to Novigrad (and the state of the city) in 1272.

Notable Locations

- Artisan's Alley: Nestled in a corner of New Corvo, this bustling street is lined with small shops and stalls showcasing the talents of local craftsmen. From intricate jewelry to handmade leather goods, Artisan's Alley is a hub for artisans to display and sell their creations.
- Corvo Cemetery: A serene resting place for the departed, situated on the outskirts of the city.
- Corvo Magical Academy: One of the many minor magic academies in the western coast. It is intended for those mages who are unable to meet the standards set by Aretuza and Ban Ard. After Toussaint became a vassal of the Empire, it became a state-subsidized institution—somewhere between a Nordling academy and an Imperial one.
- De Valois Castle: The imposing stronghold and residence of the ruling de Valois family, located near Old Corvo. The castle serves as the political and administrative center of the city. Like many places, it was built upon elven ruins. In this case, the ruins of the elven outpost that was originally Corvo.
    - Gifts from the Saints (de Valois Gardens): A beautifully landscaped garden adjacent to de Valois Castle.
- La Rose Cachée Theater: Tucked away in New Corvo, this intimate theater is known for its avant-garde productions and thought-provoking plays. The theater is famous for its curious adaptations of plays based on poems, like Don Jovan of Tridam, renowned for its paradoxical content blending epic, romance, and satire, divided into 18 cantos. It was written by an anonymous author but attributed to the bard and poet Jezkier, claimed to be his final work before his death. Supposedly, it is based on a real figure with similar

characteristics, and famous but not popular books, such as the Black Book of Ellander.

- Le Fruto Inconnu: Known for its discreet and luxurious services, Le Fruto Inconnu is the premier high-end brothel in the city, attracting affluent and influential members of Corvoan society. Situated in the Old Corvo district, its opulent decor and skilled courtesans contribute to its status as a sophisticated establishment.
- More than 1000 remedies For You and Your Family: An herbalist and alchemy store located in the New Corvo district, run by Hawa aep Heithal, where alchemical materials can be found at reasonable prices. Except for the plants, which are usually more expensive as they are imported. As the name suggests, the store also offers remedies for various types of ailments.
- Rumplestelt Blacksmith's Shop: After the events that unfolded in Metinna, Rumplestelt, fearing accusations and persecution for the death of Queen Zivelina, fled to Toussaint in search of refuge. He settled in the city of Corvo, returning to his former profession as a blacksmith. Although he rarely caters to humans due to the fear of deception or being coerced into divulging the knowledge of crafting a gwyhyr, as he remains one of the few gnomes possessing the expertise to manufacture these legendary swords that ceased production centuries ago. The majority of his clients are halflings in need of tools for their farms.
- Saint Plegmund Square: A bustling square in the heart of Corvo named after the revered Saint Plegmund.
- Temple of Epona: Located on the outskirts of Corvo, near the road leading to Beauclair and in close proximity to the Halflings quarter, the Temple of Epona stands as a distinctive and relatively new addition to the city's architectural tapestry. A rarity among temples, this sacred structure is uniquely devoted solely to the worship of the goddess of horses, Epona.
- The Laughing Sphinx Inn: A lively and eccentric establishment nestled in the heart of New Corvo, managed by Kushal Khara—a Melukkan mage turned merchant, and later, a tavern keeper. Khara boasts of defeating a sphinx deep in the Tir Tochair mountains, saving a group of gnomes from their imminent demise due to their inability to answer the demon's riddle, before finally settling in the city. However, due to Khara's extravagant nature, patrons widely believe that this tale is an invention by the owner to infuse more '*life*' into the tavern rather than anything real. The inn has garnered a reputation for its nightly entertainment, featuring performances by bards,

storytellers, and occasionally, mages specializing in illusionary magic. The décor of the establishment is adorned with sphinx motifs, paying homage to Khara's alleged adventure, and patrons often revel in complicated riddles with the workers in exchange for free food or drinks, a tradition of the local. And puzzles and other various games among themselves while indulging in exotic beverages imported from Zerrikania, Ofir, and, naturally, Melukka. It is said that there is a riddle, which no one has solved, but if someone gets it right, Khara will give them free drinks for life.

- Vysogota's House: A tavern located in the Saints District, as the name suggests, in the building that was once the home of the renowned Vysogota. Despite the controversy, both for the name, the figure he was, and for having taken over the house where Vysogota was born, raised, and spent a significant part of his life, Vysogota's House remains a popular gathering place for locals and travelers alike. The walls are adorned with memorabilia celebrating the life and accomplishments of Vysogota, showcasing his contributions to medicine, alchemy, philosophy, and more. The tavern hosts regular events such as poetry nights, book readings, and discussions on history and philosophy. The ambiance is one of intellectual engagement and cultural appreciation, attracting patrons seeking both a refined atmosphere and a connection to the city's esteemed history.
- Zammorto Bank Corvan Branch: The first branch of the Zammorto bank outside of Redania. This financial institution plays a crucial role in managing trade transactions and currency exchanges in Corvo, particularly with the influx of merchants from Tir Tochair.
- Zerrikanian Embassy: Located in the Saints District, the Zerrikanian Embassy stands as a symbol of diplomatic relations between Toussaint and Zerrikania. The embassy serves not only as a center for diplomatic activities but also as a place of rest for members of the Faithel who are heading to Tir Tochair.

Notable People

- De Valois Family: The ruling family of the city holds the title of counts, a distinction believed to have been granted by Ludovic himself, the first king of Toussaint. The family's ascendancy dates back to the early stages of the human invasion when they played a pivotal role in expelling the elves from what is now Corvo.

    - Count Lucien Edouard Armel de Valois: The head of the de Valois family in the late 13th century and the ruling count of Corvo until 1283 when he died. Known for his diplomatic skills and leadership, Count Lucien managed to maintain stability and prosperity in the city despite its unique economic challenges.
    - Alexandre Nokta Laurent de Valois: The son of Lucien, Nokta was a proud ducal knight and later count. He emerged as a prominent figure in the late 13th century in Corvo, following the unfortunate demise of his father in 1283 when he inherited the title of count, thereby assuming leadership responsibilities for the de Valois family and the city. His first five years were complicated, marked by scandals that, in some sectors, tarnished his reputation. These scandals included his relationship with a witcheress, and later, in 1285, his defeat against a witcher, resulting in a loss of respect that he struggled to regain for some time.

- Hawa aep Heithal: An herbalist and alchemist, rumored to be part gnome. It is said that she was expelled from her gnomish commune after discovering its mixed heritage. Despite this, Hawa has thrived independently, establishing her herbalist and alchemy store in the New Corvo district. Her expertise in alchemical arts and herbal remedies has gained her a reputation for providing effective solutions to various ailments to the people of the city.
- Josué Roatta: An ancestor of Bollius, who, after being exiled by his father, spent some time working in Corvo to accumulate the money necessary to purchase what would later become Corvo Bianco. Although not native to the city, his actions there would earn him the esteemed title of the prodigal son of Corvo.
- Kushal Khara: An eccentric Melukkan mage with a complicated past, turned merchant, and then turned tavern keeper who settled in Corvo. Owner of the Laughing Sphinx Inn.
- Lisabette Desrosiers: Originally known as Lisabette of Talgar, she is a young sorceress (by mage standards) from Kovir. After some time away, she decided to return to Toussaint, where she had served as an advisor to the previous duke before the ascent of Raymund. Failing to establish a connection with Anna Henrietta upon her return, she chose to settle in Corvo, in a mansion located in the Saints District. Eventually, she became the advisor to the count who governs the city. She has a complicated history with the Skelliger

mage and explorer, Finn Thordvison.

- Lysandra Cutterin: Another sorceress. In this case, a native of Toussaint who moved to the city during the Witch Hunts. She serves as the Dean of the Corvo Magical Academy.
- Madame Laëtitia d'Aubry: A prominent figure in the social circles of Corvo, and the last descendant of the legendary Reginald d'Aubry. Madame Celestine was known for hosting lavish events and gatherings at her mansion in the Saints District. Her influence extended beyond the city, and her soirées were attended by nobles, merchants, and artists alike from the surrounding regions.
- Marie-Pierre Bardin: A talented fashion designer and seamstress based in the affluent Saints District. Marie's creations are highly sought after by the elite of Corvo, and her fashion house attracts clients from all over Toussaint. Her influence extends to the city's social scene, and her designs are often featured in high-profile events.
- Rumplestelt: Famous gnome blacksmith known for his deal with the queen of Metinna, who, after what happened, prefers to keep a low profile.
- Théo Bourcier: A charismatic bard, poet and storyteller, part of the so-called "Lettenhove Generation" (along with other figures such as Jezkier and Jaskra) who was popular in the taverns and inns of Corvo. Théo was well-liked for his beautiful voice and entertaining tales, both fictional and historical.
- Vysogota : The most famous person from this city, Vysogota, was a physician, surgeon, alchemist, researcher, historian, philosopher, and ethicist. He was also a former professor at both the Oxenfurt Academy and the Imperial Academy, exiled from the Empire due to his dissenting opinions in politics. There is a district named after him, which was later renamed as Saints District by orders of Duke Raymund to avoid problems with the Empire. However, people still informally call it Vysogota District.
- Xirdneh II of Zangvebar (Xirdneh Jr): A bard of mixed Zangvebarian and half-elf heritage, he adopted his artistic father's name to continue his legacy and ensure that the name would once again be renowned worldwide and never forgotten. While not part of the so-called "Lettenhove Generation" as he inherited his father's disdain for Dandelion, he capitalized on the void left after the famous bard's retirement for his own benefit. After spending a considerable amount of time building his reputation in his father's homeland, embarking on adventures alongside a certain witcher associated

with the explorer Fabio Sachs, becoming the personal bard of the Zangvebarian king, and traveling to lands as distant and mythical to Nordlings as the Apumayu Basin, Xirdneh Jr decided to settle in Corvo. Taking advantage of the fame of the duchy to continue honoring his father while resting from the many years of his nomadic lifestyle. Like his father, he was known for his lute-strumming, although not as ferocious as the original Xirdneh. The Laughing Sphinx Inn, in particular, became a favored venue for his nightly performances every friday. His bardic abilities, combined with the tavern's eccentric ambiance, drew patrons seeking both entertainment and a taste of the exotic.

Trivia

- The Lettenhove Generation is a reference to the Generation of '98. A group of Spanish writers, essayists, and poets deeply affected by the moral, political, and social crisis triggered in Spain by the military defeat in the Spanish-American War. In this case, it would be a generation of poets, writers, and bards who have been heavily influenced by Dandelion/Jaskier and are trying to fill the void he left when he retired and began writing his memoirs (that is, narrating the events of The Witcher 1, 2, and 3, approximately from the end of The Witcher 3 to 1319, when he would be around 80 years old)
- Vysogota's House is a reference to Óscar Domínguez's tavern, a tavern located in the house of the Spanish-French surrealist painter, Óscar Domínguez.

Image Credits

- Map of the geographical position of Corvo by u/RabbitSlayeru
- View from the district of Old Corvo by Midjourney V6

Gallery

Geographical position of Corvo

Corvo City Map

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